

**Chapter 33: Exam practice question****Quality assurance at the hairdressers**

**1** Define the following terms:

**a** quality assurance (2)

This is a system of agreeing and meeting quality standards at each stage of production, in order to ensure consumer satisfaction. It does not just focus on the finished product, but involves self-checking by workers of their own output against agreed quality standards and places emphasis on prevention of poor quality by getting it right first time.

**b** continuous improvement. (2)

This is a way of improving the efficiency of a business by ongoing identification of what may be small improvements. The combination of a lot of small improvements may result in larger, more significant improvements. The underlying philosophy is that of 'Kaizen', which assumes that all workers have something to contribute to improving the way a business operates and the way the product is made.

Apply **Resources table 3a** mark band descriptors.

**2** Outline **two** drawbacks to this business of not meeting customer expectations. (5)

Drawbacks may include:

- complaints from customers who do not then return
- complaints may also be noticed by other customers; they too may not return even if their own cut is fine
- more demanding and profitable services may not be asked for
- poor reputation for quality
- need to increase advertising expenditure to improve sales demand
- staff may become demotivated and may look for other jobs
- any other relevant point.

Apply **Resources table 3b** mark band descriptors.

**3** Analyse the benefits to this hairdressers of improving the quality of their service. (7)

Benefits may include:

- improved reputation
- repeat customers
- reduced advertising expenditure
- staff motivation may increase
- improved revenue and profits
- league table recognition may reinforce staff pride and performance
- any other relevant benefit

SL: apply **Resources table 1** mark band descriptors.

HL: apply **Resources table 2** mark band descriptors.

A justified conclusion is **not** required.

- 4** Discuss the problems the new manager of FatBoyTrims might have when trying to implement the quality targets she has set. **(9)**

Problems may include:

- staff resistance to change
- conflict due to resistance to change
- four out of six targets are timing based – it would be difficult to time these accurately without raising customer concern and/or questions
- extra staff need to be recruited – takes time and costs money
- staff who are given extra responsibility need training
- feedback forms may be influenced by stylists with whom they are discussed, so may not be reliable
- the 20% of clients chosen to fill in feedback forms may be the clients who appear to be most satisfied
- any other relevant point.

SL: apply **Resources table 1** mark band descriptors.

(SL questions do not usually go up to 9 marks, so the HL table is best used for SL students.)

HL: apply **Resources table 2** mark band descriptors.

A justified conclusion is usually required for a 9-mark question.